

THE COLORADO NRCS CONNECTION



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Insights & Highlights

by

*Allen Green**State Conservationist*

Needless to say, they were very impressed with our overall operations; thanks to all of you for making us proud.

The other significant event for me in November was the Annual Colorado

Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting held this year in Glenwood Springs. I found the atmosphere of this year's meeting to be the most positive of the meetings I have attended in past years. I was most impressed by the participation during the special session on funding for Districts. Not only was there a full house, but the attitude was one of making something happen. The workshops, general session, and business meeting were informative and productive; and the attitude, even in the hallways, was extremely positive. I, for one, am excited to be associated with CACD, CSCB, and the leadership they are providing the Districts in Colorado. I ask that all NRCS employees do their part to support our State's Conservation Districts in their efforts to

increase their capacity and leadership.

Iwould like to also take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to **Bob Zebroski**, Director of the State Conservation Board, on his announced retirement. As most of you are aware, during Bob's 40+ year career in conservation he worked in a number of positions and locations with the Soil Conservation Service. I owe a personal thanks to Bob for his guidance, advice, and more importantly friendship, since my arrival in Colorado. It is rare to find someone that has maintained their commitment and dedication to a cause for as long as Bob has. I hope you will all join me as we wish Bob and his wife Betha all the best in this next phase of their lives.

Iclose with a special thanks to all of you and wish you the very happiest of Holidays.

It has been an interesting last month for me as State Conservationist in Colorado. During the week of November 8, we were visited by the top leadership of our agency. **Dana York**, the new Associate Chief, and all of the Deputy Chiefs for NRCS conducted a three day leadership review in Colorado. The review was very informal and was as much an opportunity to share ideas as it was to evaluate our State operations. They did take the time to visit two Field Offices (and special thanks to the Longmont and Ft Morgan Field Offices), the principal staff, Area Conservationists, and some of our partners. I could not have been more proud to have this group see what great work all of NRCS and our partners are doing for conservation on private lands in Colorado.

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Southern Ute Tribe Growing Cottonwood Plantation

Members of the Southern Ute Tribe in Ignacio, Colorado, participate in traditional ceremonies each year including the Bear Dance in the spring and the Sun Dance in the summer. Prior to these time-honored ceremonies, pole-sized narrowleaf cottonwood trees are cut and used to construct shade houses and other ceremonial structures. Although there are riparian areas on the reservation where cottonwoods grow, many of the most accessible areas have become depleted while other areas are quite a distance away from the ceremonial location. Recognizing a need to establish a new source of young narrowleaf cottonwoods, the Tribe, with technical assistance from NRCS and the Colorado State Forest Service, is developing a Cottonwood Plantation to meet the future needs of the Tribe.

In 2002, the Southern Ute Tribal Forestry Division raised containerized narrowleaf cottonwoods started from cuttings obtained from various locations on the reservation. The saplings were cultivated in Bureau of Indian Affairs Forestry greenhouses in Ignacio. In spring 2003, when a suitable river bottom site was located for establishment of the plantation, approximately 2,000 trees were planted. Another 2,000 trees were planted in the summer of 2004, covering a total of two acres. **Sterling Moss**, NRCS Tribal Liaison, and **Bob Clark**, Conservation Technician from the Durango Field Office, provided technical support during the development of the plantation, as well as assistance in the design and layout of a gated pipe irrigation

system. **Kent Grant**, Colorado State Forest Service, assisted with installation of a weed barrier fabric.

John Holman, Southern Ute Tribal Forester, says that the plantation, when fully mature, will be comprised of approximately 8 acres and will be harvested on a rotation basis to serve the needs of the Tribe during the ceremonies.

"The plantation will supplement the supply of cottonwood trees for the Tribe's ceremonies," said Holman, "and will help to take the pressure off of riparian sites which have been used in the past for cottonwood pole cutting."



NRCS staff provided the technical support for the design and layout of a gated pipe irrigation system.



Southern Ute forestry staff install weed barrier fabric on seedling cottonwoods.



Paid Holidays for the remainder of 2005

Friday, December 24

Friday, December 31

Zig Ziglar on:

Controlling Your Future

Many years ago as a young, aspiring speaker, I heard an older speaker who was quite philosophical say that you are where you are because that's exactly where you want to be. I thought about his statement, decided it was the "wisdom of the ages" and verbalized it in my own presentations. Over a period of time, a series of events took place, which convinced me that his statement was not true in my case. I was broke, in debt and down in the dumps. I wanted to be prosperous and excited about my future.

It came through loud and clear that I was where I was and what I was because of the decisions and choices I had made in my life. I made those choices based on the information I had, much of which was erroneous. The reality is, if I'm given the wrong directions to go from "point A"

see Controlling Your Future page 10

Did You Know.....

During National American Indian Heritage Month in November, we honor the accomplishments and culture of American Indians



and recognize their contributions to America. To help educate Americans and illustrate the important role of the native people to the Nation, the new National Museum of the American Indian opened this fall in Washington D.C.

Have you heard about the Colorado AgrAbility Project?



Colorado AgrAbility is a partnership between Colorado State University Cooperative Extension and Easter Seals Colorado. It is a non-profit entity and part of a nationwide network of United States Department of Agriculture programs begun through the 1990 Farm Bill. The

goal of the Colorado AgrAbility Project is to serve Colorado's farmers and ranchers and their families who are facing new obstacles due to injury or illness.

Colorado AgrAbility provides on-site functional and work-site assessments and makes recommendations for assistive technology that will allow these individuals to continue to participate in the work they love. Colorado AgrAbility does not have funds to purchase assistive

technology but they will work with other agencies and organizations to help find the needed resources to help participants.

All services are free of charge at Colorado AgrAbility. For more information about Colorado AgrAbility or to find out how you can help, please call 303.937.7713, extension 224, or toll-free at 800.335.2598. Or, visit their website at www.cahs.colostate.edu/hdfs/faculty/fetsch/agrability.htm

Did You Know?...

The USDA NRCS State Office Engineering Department is developing a curriculum to provide employees with basic technical training in the area of conservation engineering.

The proposed Colorado NRCS Conservation Engineering University will offer courses that will focus on mission-critical practices. Courses offered through the University include the Fundamentals of Surveying and Plan Preparation, Basic Hydraulics, Basic Structure Planning, Irrigation

System Planning, and Stream Bank Protection Methods.

The courses will be taught by NRCS Engineers and technicians in both classroom and field settings. Training will be held at various locations around the state of Colorado and is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2005.

For more information about Colorado NRCS Conservation Engineering University, please call **John Andrews**, State Conservation Engineer, at 720-544-2834.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October

In 1988, Congress designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month to increase awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities. Various programs carried out throughout the month also highlight the specific employment barriers that still need to be addressed and removed. The NRCS theme this year is "JUDGE Us By Our Ability, Not Our Disability."

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Each year, from September 15 to October 15, America honors the many contributions Hispanic Americans have made and continue to make to our nation by observing National Hispanic Heritage Month.

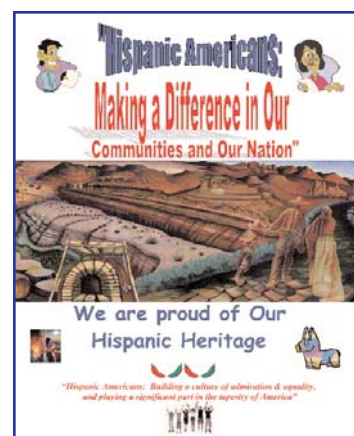
The Hispanic people were among the earliest settlers in the New World, and the accounts of their ventures into the uncharted territories of the southeast and southwest form part of the United States of America's literary and historical heritage.

This year **Kathy Trujillo**, a 20-year Sangre de Cristo RC&D employee, won the NRCS Hispanic Heritage Month Poster contest. Trujillo will receive a cash award.

Today, more than 37 million people in the United States are of Hispanic origin.



"I entered the poster contest to share a vision and to express pride in my heritage," said Kathy Trujillo.



Trujillo's winning poster was posted in NRCS offices throughout the nation in observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

on the pulse

Area Office News

Area One

The Bookcliff Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service assisted the Farm Bureau Agency at a corn maze this year. **Charles Ryden**, president of the Bookcliff Conservation District, has grown the maze for the last several years, and opens it up for Farm Day. Children arrived early in the day, toured the maze and visited the different booths manned by



Michelle Hyde, WAE Conservation Technician of the Glenwood Springs Field Office, waits for the right question during a game of water jeopardy.

the District and the NRCS Glenwood Springs Field Office staff. This year, NRCS expanded its educational booths to include the riparian trailer, "water jeopardy," and a soils pit. The entire staff assisted during Farm Day this year, including: **Dennis Davidson**, District Conservationist; **Mike Kishimoto**, Engineering Technician; **Steve Jaen**, Range Conservationist; **Wayne Jipsen**, RC & D Coordinator; **Sharie Prow**, Bookcliff CD Manager; and **Michelle Hyde**, WAE Conservation Technician.



At the corn maze, children gather around the riparian trailer while **Steven Jaen**, Glenwood Springs Field Office Range Conservationist, demonstrates how water erodes stream banks and distributes silt and debris.

Gunnison Field office staff participated in the 7th Grade Mill Creek Youth Summit in late September. Approximately 100 students and advisors attended the 10th annual event where they rotated around five stations which addressed timber, wilderness camping, topography, and watersheds. Students were also invited to join a plant walk past a wilderness boundary.

The Lake Fork Watershed Stakeholders Group recently sponsored a riparian trailer demonstration by Gunnison Field Office staff along with a walking tour in Lake City. The purpose of the demonstration and tour was to provide information to summer landowners about the group and its activities, as well as to provide resource information about other agencies working in the area. Gunnison Field Office staff also gave a presentation on the Water Supply Forecasting System entitled "How Dry Is It."

The Grand Junction Field Office held a news conference in Palisade to provide the most recent information about the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP). Approximately 18,000 acres of working agricultural land, in 14 different Colorado counties, are currently being protected under the program.

Area Two

NRCS employees from throughout northeastern Colorado met recently in Fort Morgan for the Annual Area 2 All Employees Meeting. Area Conservationist **Roy Hall** hosted the meeting to review this year's progress, to talk about the challenges of successfully delivering NRCS programs, and to provide updates on agency policies and procedures. State Conservationist **Allen Green** attended the meeting to recognize and applaud the effort and achievement of staff who work in the seventeen Area 2 field offices.



The annual Area 2 meeting brings employees together to discuss better ways of delivering soil and water conservation practices to landowners.

At the recent Area 2 All Employee Meeting in Fort Morgan, State Conservationist **Allen Green**, on behalf of Chief **Bruce Knight**, awarded the USDA Honor Award to Fort Morgan Field Office District Conservationist **C.W. Scott**. Scott was recognized for his contribution as a member of a national NRCS team in the development of the new Electronic Field Office Technical Guide, eFOTG. eFOTG is the primary scientific reference tool for NRCS. The new electronic version offers quick and efficient access to technical information on the application of soil and water conservation practices to the land.



C.W. Scott (left) is presented the USDA Honor Award by Allen Green. "The 58th Annual U.S. Department of Agriculture Honor Award is the most prestigious honor bestowed by the Secretary of Agriculture," announced NRCS Chief Bruce Knight recently, "and is a tribute to our employees for their commitment to doing the best job possible in serving their local communities."

Fort Collins Field Office Range Conservationist **John Fusaro** recently provided conservation leadership and technical guidance to Colorado State University (CSU) and to the City of Fort Collins. Fusaro was a guest lecturer at a CSU Rangeland Measurements course where he led the class on a tour of a newly acquired county open space area and discussed ecological sites, rangeland health, identification of key areas, and taught the class how to "read" a site.

Fusaro also led a rangeland tour for the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas staff and Natural Areas Advisory Board, showing different rangeland conservation practices in action. The group discussed a variety of conservation

topics including noxious weeds, multi-species grazing, fire management, invasive species, and wildlife habitat. Fort Collins plans to add a significant amount of new open space acreage to their existing 35,000 acres.

Ron Neher, Fort Morgan Field Office Resource Conservationist and **Scott McIntosh**, East Adams and Deer Trail Conservation Districts Soil Technician, along with Byers Field Office staff **Deric Clemons**, Soil Conservationist; **Sheryl Wailes**, Conservation District Manager; Patty Cec, Soil Conservation Technician; and **Chris Banner**, WAE Conservation Technician recently held three days of workshops for Bennett, Deer Trail, and Byers 6th Graders. Almost 200 students participated in the workshops, which were held in conjunction with the Colorado Conservation Districts' Poster Contest.



Scott McIntosh gives a demonstration in front of the riparian trailer.

In the classroom, students learned about conservation practices before leaving to visit the outdoor classroom, Pines Nature Trail, located south of Byers. At Pines Nature Trail, students learned to identify forest land, urban land, cropland, and rangeland; to see both old and new conservation practices such as terraces, ponds, dams, windmills, silt and cross-fencing; and to see wind and water erosion and the results of efforts to heal these occurrences.

In addition, the students had opportunities to have hands-on experiences with equipment such as soils probes, grass measuring hoops, measuring wheels, and

laser levels, and to gather around the riparian trailer for a watershed demonstration.

Students who compete in the poster contest use what they have learned to design a poster that illustrates from one to three conservation practices. The District selects the top two posters and the two winning students receive a monetary award, are recognized at the District's annual meeting, and then represent the District at the State poster competition.

Area Three



For many years, Miller has worked with soils judging teams who are preparing for Future Farmers of America contests.

David Miller, Rocky Ford District Conservationist, recently taught the Rocky Ford High School Vo-Ag class about soils. He spent one day in the classroom providing information about soils and their place in agronomy and construction. On the second and third days, he took the class to soils pits on cropland and on rangeland to provide information on soil profiles and the types of soil at each site. The students then competed for three slots available on the Rocky Ford High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) Soils Judging Team. **Bob Klinkerman** and **Deanna Russell**, Rocky Ford Soil Conservationists, helped during the field trips. Miller was also invited to teach soils at Crowley County High School in Ordway.

The Teller-Park Conservation District hosted a conservation tour for Woodland Park teachers

during its Annual Meeting in September. More than 40 teachers visited Eagle Rock Ranch on the Tarryall River. The ranch is owned by **Lawlor Wakem**, Teller-Park Conservation District Board Member. Topics covered during the tour included holistic grazing rotations, low stress animal handling facilities and methods, pasture seeding, and weed control strategies. The group toured several of the more than 50 in-stream and bank stabilization structures installed on the river.

Leon Kot, Woodland Park District Conservationist, assisted **Ginger Krabbenhoff** of the Coalition for the Upper South Platte at an exhibition booth during the Home Remodeling & Log Home Expo in Colorado Springs. Visitors picked up Information on erosion control and seeding, weeds, firewise methods, and the recent US Forest Service road closure decision relating to the Hayman Fire in Pike National Forest. About 30,000 people attended.

Kimberly Diller, Multi-county Rangeland Management Specialist in Canon City, was recently interviewed by **Lorrie Boyer** who has a syndicated radio agricultural show on the Colorado Ag News Network. Diller discussed the use and benefits of flash grazing, and where it might be used in the context of drought recovery.

Mitzi Moore, Baca County Conservation District Manager, and **Storm Casper**, Springfield Soil Conservation Technician, took the river and riparian trailer to Springfield/Walsh elementary school for a demonstration recently.



The elementary students learned about watersheds, wetlands, water erosion, and sedimentation of rivers and water streams.

Lorenz Sutherland, Area 3 Resource Conservationist, hosted the National Salinity Team at the La Junta area office in October. Lorenz is a member of the team, which is developing the curriculum for a NEDC Saline Sodic Soils Course to be used nationwide by NRCS and other agencies. The team is finalizing the curriculum with plans to pilot the course in early 2005.



The Salinity Team pictured left to right: Steve Lacy, Geologist, Montana; Dennis Neffendorf, Agronomist, Texas; Lorenz Sutherland; Rick Fasching, Agronomist, Montana; Pat Willey, Engineer, Oregon; Claire Prestwich, Engineer, Oregon. Not Pictured: Michael Petersen, Area Soil Scientist/Irrigation Water Management Specialist, Colorado.

Area Four

The Center Conservation District hosted its 40th Annual Poster Contest and Conservation Tour in October. Presentations included "River Trailer" by **Angie Graber**, Public Affairs Specialist; "Windbreaks" by **Eldon Rizzi**, CSU Forest Service staff; "Range Management" by **Larry McBride**, District Conservationist; and "Water/Irrigation Management" by **Cathy Dix**, Soil Conservationist and **Danny Neufeld**, Center Conservation District board president. A Pivot and Agronomy demonstration was given by **Larry Kawanabe**, Irrigation Water Management Specialist, and **Brian Neufeld**, Center Conservation District boardmember; and a Wildlife demonstration was presented by the Division of Wildlife.

Brenda Anderson, Center District Clerk and **Ron Gilbertson**, Soil Conservation technician, man-

aged the event and served the 65 students in attendance a hot dog and hamburger lunch. Participating sixth grade classes came from Center, Moffat, and Mountain Valley schools. The event took place on **Bill Ellithorpe's** farm, and each student took home a five-pound sack of potatoes donated by Aspen Produce.



During the conservation tour, Danny Neufeld demonstrates irrigation water management using a trailer filled with sand and props.

The Alamosa Field Office helped teach 5th & 6th grade students from Sangre de Cristo Schools about potato harvesting and conservation practices at **Clarence Robinson's** farm. Robinson, President of Mosca-Hooper Conservation District, enjoys teaching youth about conservation and harvest every fall. Students were able to see and learn about conservation practices, including a reservoir, windbreaks, and conservation crop rotations.



NRCS Area 4 staff met students at a Sangre de Cristo farm to teach them about conservation practices.



Afterward, students gathered as many potatoes as they could carry home.

on the pulse

State Office News



Sims wears her Purdue University jacket with pride.

In October, **Marsha Sims**, State Archeologist, was honored with other former athletes at the homecoming football game at Purdue University in Indiana. A former swimming athlete, Sims competed in 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle events for Purdue. She was called onto the football field during a pre-game honor ceremony and recognized for being one of the University's former athletes.

Sims graduated from Purdue in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology. In 1990 she earned her master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Nebraska, and she also attended the University of Missouri where she completed all the required courses for a PhD., ABD (all but dissertation).

NRCS State Office employees, along with the Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, the Colorado Agricultural Statistics Service, and the Livestock Marketing Information Center celebrated Diversity Day in early October with a potluck luncheon. Guest Speaker Dr. David Conde, Associate Vice President of

Academic Affairs at Metropolitan State College in Denver, discussed the current trend of immigration into the United States and its affect on the economy, business, and society.



State Conservationist Allen Green introduces the guest speaker at the State Office Diversity Day Potluck Luncheon.

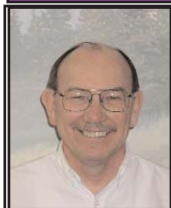
Welcome new state office employee, Cartographic Technician **Kristy Floyd**. She comes to Lakewood from the Brighton Field Office where she worked as a data collector for the National Resources Inventory since 2001. In May 2000, Floyd graduated from the Purdue University School of Agriculture where she earned a B.S. degree in Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences. Floyd is a native of Indiana and says she's just a country girl trying to figure out city life in Colorado.

Welcome new state office employee, Economist **Julie Miller**. She comes to NRCS from the U.S. Forest Service where she worked as a Research Assistant. Prior to that, Miller worked as a compliance analyst in the mutual fund field. She earned an M.S. in Agricultural and Resource Economics from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, and a

B.A. in Economics from Villanova University in Philadelphia. Miller was born in Texas and grew up in Arkansas. She enjoys spending her spare time with family and friends, and likes many outdoor activities including skiing, mountain biking, and snow boarding.

Cameron Loerch, former State Soil Scientist of Colorado, said a fond farewell to friends and coworkers in November, and relocated to his home state of Nebraska to serve as its State Soil Scientist. Loerch has been with NRCS for over 25 years and worked in Soil Survey Offices in Utah, West Virginia, and Alabama, as well as Colorado and Nebraska. His family is looking forward to being in Nebraska again among friends and family. **Alan Price** is the Acting State Soil Scientist for Colorado.

Resource Conservationist for Programs Tony Puga has returned to his position at the State Office after serving a detail in Washington for several months. Puga, who served as the Acting National Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Manager at National Headquarters, helped develop new policy and tracked the progress of easement closings. During his absence, **Dawn Jackson**, District Conservationist, assumed the responsibilities as State Coordinator for EQIP, WHIP, and WRP. Jackson has returned to her position in the Sterling Field Office.



Robert Zebroski
Director

Robert Zebroski and **Carl Zimmerman** drafted a white paper on the assistance provided by the conservation districts as related to the Severance Tax Trust Fund. The paper will be part of the presentation to Russell George, Director of the Department of Natural Resources. This information will be in addition to the proposal on the sales tax for conservation districts.

The Upper South Platte Watershed held their fall meeting in Commerce City. Four resolutions were presented to the group for consideration.

Lamar was the location for the fall meeting of the Lower Arkansas Watershed. Nine of the ten districts in the watershed were represented. State Representative **Brad Young** gave a presentation on the fiscal status of the State and impacts of TABOR. One resolution on EQIP was approved.

The Upper Arkansas Watershed held their fall meeting in Pueblo. **Senator Wayne Allard's** office was represented at the meeting. No resolutions were presented.

Robert Zebroski gave a presentation on the conservation districts at the annual meeting of the Colorado Watershed Assembly which he attended with **Pam King**. The Colorado Watershed Assembly has always had a high level of interest in developing partnerships with the conservation districts.

Zebroski also provided training to **Florine Daugherty**, new district manager for the Flagler Conservation District; **Diana Iuppa**, new district manager for Spanish Peaks

Purgatorie and Branson Trinchera Conservation Districts; and **Connie Baker**, new district manager for East Otero and Olney Boone Conservation Districts.

Platte Valley and Southeast Weld Conservation Districts are holding discussions regarding a possible consolidation. A joint meeting will be held in coming months to look at the advantages to the districts of such a consolidation.

Zebroski is working with a subcommittee of the State Technical Committee to develop criteria and make recommendations to identify the watersheds that will participate in the Conservation Security Act next January.

Carl Zimmerman convened a committee of resource professionals to evaluate and rank wildlife project proposals to be funded with a \$200K allocation from the Basin States Wildlife Costshare Program. Six projects were selected from 12 applications. On-site evaluations were scheduled for July, with actual development to begin late summer.

The Western Slope office is coordinating ATV training for NRCS and District employees. The first class held on June 23 was filled to capacity. Additional classes are scheduled to ensure that Districts understand the hazards related to ATV use.

Debbie Blume, CSCB Administrative Assistant, developed and distributed a document on retention/disposition of records for Conservation Districts. The Districts will use the document as a guideline in organizing and maintaining paperwork and files.

Lieutenant Governor **Jane Norton** attended the Bent Conservation District's monthly meeting in late June. The District sponsored an open house celebrating the completion of the renovation of its District Office Building.

Carl Zimmerman gave a River Trailer presentation at Cross-Orchards History Farm during the Foundation for Water Education Tour in late June.

UP AND COMING



**You
May Want To Jot
This Down!**

National Western Stock Show
..... January 1 - 23, 2005
Western Regional RC&D Meeting
..... January 9 - 12, 2005
Nat'l. Leadership Team Meeting
..... January 11 - 12, 2005
MO-5 Soils Meeting
..... January 18 - 19, 2005
Landowners' Awards Brunch
..... January 21, 2005
Home & Garden Show
..... January 23 - 30, 2005
Nat'l. Association of Conservation Districts Meeting
..... February 5 - 9, 2005

Controlling Your Future, cont'd from page 2 to

"point B," I'm not going to reach "point B" unless I change directions. It's equally true that if I'm given the wrong directions on how to move from being broke and in debt to being successful and prosperous, I'm not going to end up at the place I want to be.

One important decision you can make even as you read these words is to think about what Thomas Sikkink said: "You're not the product of a broken home, a devastated economy, a world in the upheaval of war, a minority group, a family of drunkards or a poverty-ridden neighborhood. You are the product of your own thinking processes and whatever you're thinking about today is the cornerstone of your tomorrow."

... Take control of your thoughts and your future. Determine that you will have a better tomorrow. Make specific plans to do so and I will SEE YOU AT THE TOP!

Resource Conservation and Development Council Updates

East Central Colorado RC&D Helps Secure Funds for Playground

This summer the East Central Colorado RC&D joined with Prairie Horizons, a women's civic group dedicated to enhancing the lives of area children, to raise funds and install new playground equipment in Hugo's Hines Park.

Prairie Horizons held numerous fund raising events and the Council, on behalf of the civic group, applied for numerous grants to secure funds as well. Grants were awarded for the project by Great Outdoors Colorado, Union Pacific Railroad, the Cooper Clark Foundation, and the Kenneth Kendal King Foundation. In all, over \$45,000 was raised to complete the project.



Sangre de Cristo RC&D Receives Salt Cedar Management Grant

The Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council, on behalf of the Upper Arkansas Regional Weed Management Cooperative, received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's "Pulling Together Initiative" to initiate a salt cedar (tamarisk) management program in an eight-county region of the Upper Arkansas watershed.

Salt cedar displaces the native plant community, consumes excessive water, destroys wildlife habitat, and increases the salinity of soil. These impacts affect plant communities, wildlife, agriculture, recreation, and local communities. The Upper Arkansas Regional Weed Management Cooperative has worked for the past five years to inventory and manage targeted noxious weed species.

The salt cedar management program includes increasing public awareness of the threat of salt cedar, targeting acres of salt cedar for control or eradication, an applied evaluation of management techniques and costs, and a salt cedar management plan for the region.

Colorado Big Country RC&D Names New Coordinator



Jipsen has long wanted to live and work in the north-western Colorado area. He looks forward to getting to know the Council and working with them to provide quality services to the area.

Wayne Jipsen has been named Coordinator for Colorado Big Country RC&D. He most recently served as Coordinator of the Historic Trail RC&D in south central Wyoming. Prior to that, Jipsen has worked for Heifer Project International, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Conservation Commission, and as a park ranger. He brings to the position experience in farming; exotic species management; working with landowners, foundations, and non-profits to protect and enhance habitat; introduction and improvement of livestock resources and the environment; and numerous community and economic development projects. Jipsen earned a B.S. in Fisheries & Wildlife Biology from Iowa State University.

Watershed Project Addresses Concerns on a Larger Scale

Conservation Districts instrumental in developing strategies to protect Fountain Creek Watershed

Each year millions of dollars are lost to erosion and flooding of the Fountain Creek Watershed. The area the watershed encompasses is becoming increasingly more urban; therefore, rainfall does not always drain gradually into the soil. Instead, water is collected in culverts and dumped directly into creeks. This raises the water level, and these higher flows can potentially lead to more erosion of stream banks and more flooding.

The Fountain Creek Watershed Project was formed to protect the watershed and address these concerns. It is a nonprofit organization funded by grants from several large contributors as well as private

contributions. It is one of several non-profit organizations working to solve problems on a watershed scale.

The El Paso County and Central Conservation Districts were instrumental in moving the Fountain Creek Watershed Project forward. From its inception in 1992, the two Districts have worked to formalize an agreement to encourage stakeholder involvement. In addition,

the Districts helped to develop a watershed plan in 2002 that described what needed to occur to address watershed concerns. During the Spring of 1999, a series of rainstorms caused over \$50 million in damage to the infrastructure along Fountain Creek and its tributaries. The El Paso County Conservation District acted as sponsor and advisor to over 42 repair projects. The Department of Defense, the

Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the State of Colorado, and many local communities provided funds for these projects.

Since 1996, the Fountain Creek Watershed Project has initiated several community outreach efforts to make information available including: providing over 100 public presentations, producing an educational video, distributing a bi-monthly newsletter, and developing five brochures on several different topics. It also created a GIS-based resource data system with digitized aerial photography.



These jetties were built to protect an irrigation line and a high-capacity electric line on Sundance Ranch, south of Colorado Springs.

The Fountain Creek Watershed is located along the front range of Colorado. It includes parts of three counties, eight cities, 985 square miles, and supports over 500,000 residents. Included in this area are the cities of Monument, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs.

The Corps of Engineers, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Pueblo County Council of Governments and supporters, along with cities in the watershed will spend over \$3 million in the next 4 years to develop specific solutions to the watershed concerns developed during the initial evaluation. For more information, visit the website at www.fountain-crk.org.

The Fountain Creek Watershed Project will direct the spending of \$3 million in the next 4 years to develop specific solutions to watershed concerns.

Before: Damaged drop structure at Cimarron Bridge.



After: Repaired drop structure at Cimarron Bridge.



Conservation Districts Receive \$600K for District Farm Bill Technician Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service recently granted \$600K to the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) that will enable conservation districts to hire conservation technicians to provide technical assistance in implementing the conservation programs of the 2002 Farm Bill.

The funding, provided for the District Farm Bill Technician Program, will help districts to provide improved financial and technical assistance to landowners, build dis-

trict capacity, achieve district conservation goals, and increase district visibility.

The districts hire technicians through an application ranking process that they provide to the CSCB. This year's application process ended on October 1, 2004, and funds will be distributed to the selected districts in December.

Currently, there are 29 technicians employed by conservation districts throughout Colorado. These technicians have assisted in preparing

542 plans in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); and they have performed 1,170 service actions on EQIP, CRP, and WHIP contracts. They have also assisted with Grasslands Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program contracts.

To learn more about the District Farm Bill Technician Program, call Pam King, Conservation Specialist, CSCB, at 303.239.4170.

New Snotel Sites In Colorado

The Colorado Data Collection Office (DCO) has installed five new SNOTEL sites in Colorado. All of the sites were funded by local cooperators and water users. The new sites are:

- **Glen Cove** is located on Pikes Peak along the Pikes Peak Highway near the Glen Cove rest area. The site was funded by the City of Colorado Springs and will provide valuable data on runoff into City reservoirs along the north slope of Pikes Peak.
- **Grayback** is located near the Grayback snow course south of Del Norte, and will eventually replace the snow course as a correlation is developed between the two adjacent sites. This data is important in forecasting runoff in the Rio Grande and Conejos River basins. It was funded by the Rio Grande Conservation District and the Colorado Water Conservation Board.
- **Cochetopa Pass** is located near the Cochetopa Pass snow course along the Continental Divide between Saguache and Gunnison, and will eventually replace the snow course as a correlation is developed between

the two adjacent sites. This data is important in forecasting runoff on Saguache Creek and several tributaries in the Gunnison basin. It was funded by the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District and the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

- **Bear River** is located near the Bear River snow course west of Yampa, and will eventually replace the snow course as a correlation is developed between the two adjacent sites. This data is important in the forecasting of runoff in the Upper Yampa River basin. It was funded by the Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District and the Colorado Water Conservation Board.
- **Sharkstooth** is located in the Bear Creek basin, a tributary to the Dolores River in southwestern Colorado. It will provide data from a previously unmeasured basin which contributes significant runoff into the Dolores River and McPhee Reservoir. The site was funded by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Dolores River Water Conservancy District, and the Montezuma Valley Water Users.

NATIONALLY SPEAKING

USDA Revises Payment Rates for Technical Service Providers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has released its revised "not to exceed" (NTE) payment rates for certified technical service providers. Generally, payment rates have increased and there is greater flexibility in their use.

The 2002 Farm Bill expanded the availability of technical assistance to producers by encouraging the use of third party technical service providers to assist USDA in delivering conservation technical services to farmers and ranchers. NTE rates are used when landowners contract with certified technical service providers in the private sector.

"We revised the NTE rates after considering public comments received from the first release in August 2003," NRCS Chief Bruce Knight said. *"As a result, we have increased rates, built in more flexibility for their use and significantly reduced inconsistencies in payment rates among neighboring states and regions."*

NRCS established NTE payment rates for categories of technical services

for each state. To ensure consistency across state lines, the agency reviewed payment rates between adjacent states where similar resource conditions and agricultural operations exist, taking into account differences in state laws, cost of doing business, competition and other variables.



Revised payment rates apply to new contracts through calendar year 2005. Existing contracts will continue to use the 2003 payment rates. NRCS state conservationists can adjust NTE payment rates with adequate justification and documentation.

The revised NTE rates can be found at <http://www.tsp-nte.nrcs.usda.gov/tspnte2/>.

USDA Provides More Than \$1.9 Million Additional Funding For Grasslands Conservation

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that an additional \$1.9 million in Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) funds will be provided

to farmers and ranchers in 11 states for grassland conservation. GRP is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

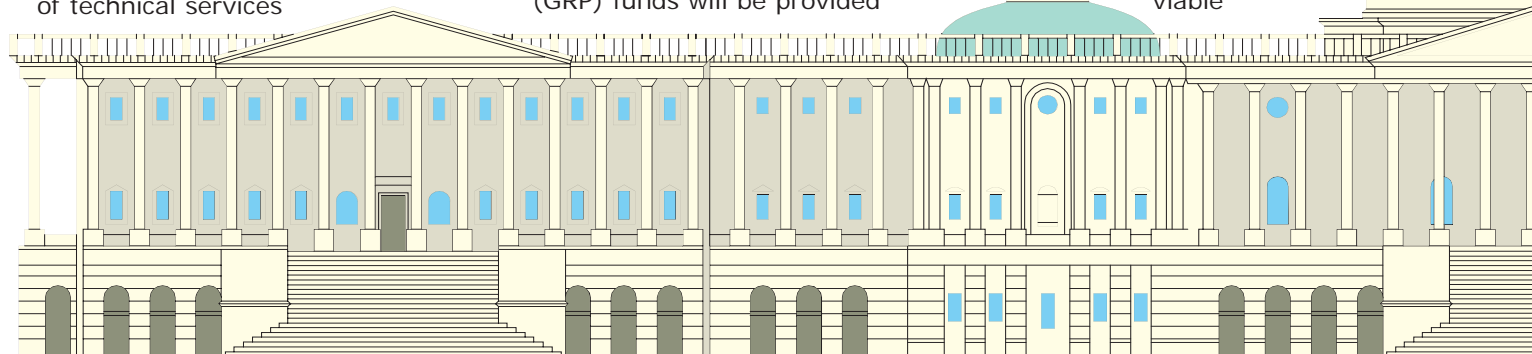
"Grasslands provide ecological benefits and play a role in environmental quality, as well as contributing to the economies of many rural areas," said Veneman. *"This voluntary program helps protect valuable grasslands from conversion to other land uses and helps to ensure this national resource is available to future generations."*

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Forest Service (FS) coordinate implementation of the program to help landowners restore and conserve grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and certain other lands. GRP also can protect



Colorado is one of 11 states that received additional GRP funds.

vulnerable grasslands from conversion to cropland or other uses and conserve valuable grasslands by helping to maintain viable



ranching and farming operations.

A portion of the additional GRP funding will be targeted to states that are home to the greater sage grouse, providing even more conservation value for the funding available. Grasslands make up the largest land cover on the Nation's private lands. Privately-owned grasslands and shrublands cover more than 525 million acres in the United States. A bird native to the Great Plains and western United States, the greater sage grouse has seen a decline in population over the past two decades.

"The Bush Administration has responded in unprecedented levels to stop the threat on the sage grouse," said NRCS Chief Bruce Knight. *"About \$450,000 of the additional funding is being made available to farmers and ranchers specifically to help protect greater sage grouse habitat in Colorado, Wyoming and Washington. These funds will add to the existing efforts and partnerships with private landowners to improve the viability of the sage grouse by restoring and protecting its habitat."*

The additional \$1.3 million brought the Administration's nationwide GRP funding to over \$70 million in FY2004, with nearly \$2.5 million targeted to protect and enhance sage grouse habitat on GRP easement lands.

NRCS Provides \$19.5 Million for Salinity Control

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that Colorado, Utah and Wyoming will receive \$19.5 million in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding to control salinity in the Colorado River Basin. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide \$9.7 million to both Colorado and Utah and \$90,000 to Wyoming. Only these three states have USDA-approved salinity control projects in the basin.

The Colorado River Basin is the primary domestic water supply source for 27 million residents in seven states (portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) and a source of irrigation water for more than 3.5 million acres of farmland.

"These funds will help farmers and ranchers control salinity on their lands and improve water quality in the basin so that millions of people can have a cleaner, safer domestic water supply," Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said.

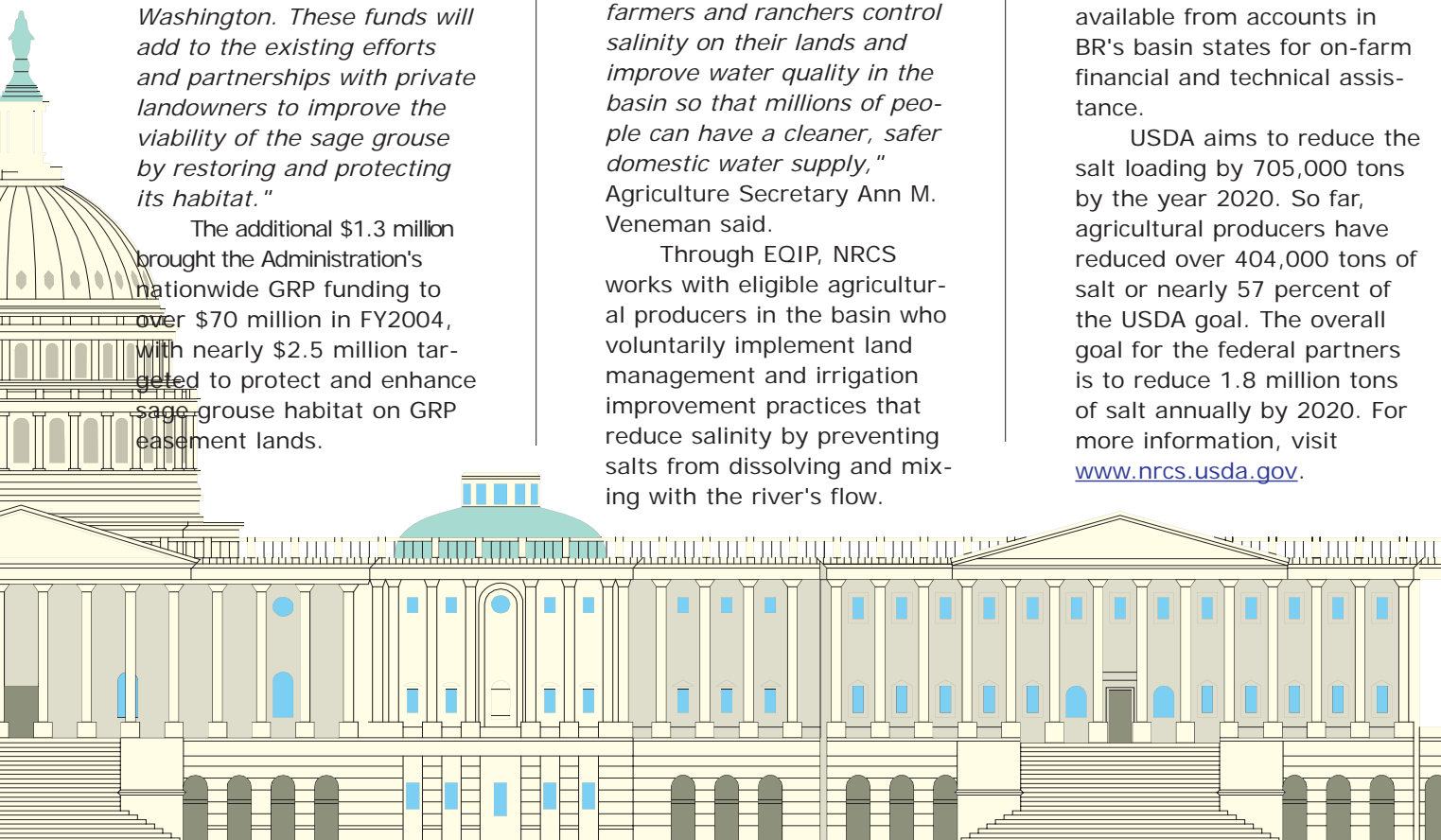
Through EQIP, NRCS works with eligible agricultural producers in the basin who voluntarily implement land management and irrigation improvement practices that reduce salinity by preventing salts from dissolving and mixing with the river's flow.

Improved irrigation systems reduce leaching in the soil which, in turn, reduces the amount of salt that moves through the soil into the water table. The end result is that less salt ends up in the Colorado River that flows more than 1,400 miles from its headwaters in Wyoming and Colorado to the Gulf of California in the Republic of Mexico.

USDA partners with the U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation (BR) and Bureau of Land Management to carry out Colorado River Basin salinity control activities. The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, established in 1973 by the basin states, provides interstate and inter-agency coordination and guidance for the combined state and federal salinity control efforts.

For every dollar of EQIP funds allocated to salinity control in the authorized project areas, 43 cents is made available from accounts in BR's basin states for on-farm financial and technical assistance.

USDA aims to reduce the salt loading by 705,000 tons by the year 2020. So far, agricultural producers have reduced over 404,000 tons of salt or nearly 57 percent of the USDA goal. The overall goal for the federal partners is to reduce 1.8 million tons of salt annually by 2020. For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.



DeBeque-Plateau Valley Conservation District Demonstrates Animal Waste Management

Projects Funded by EQIP

by Jerry D. Schwien

Charles "Mick" Meiklejohn, President of the DeBeque-Plateau Valley Conservation District, and J. D. Hill, Vice-President of the District, installed animal waste management systems this year to improve water quality through their cattle corrals. The conservation district will use these projects to demonstrate the benefits to other ranchers.

The projects were installed with help from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provided 75 percent cost-share to four ranchers in the Plateau Valley to isolate livestock from surface water and provide an alternative supply of water for cattle.

"Mick" Meiklejohn is pleased with the results.

"Before we had muddy corrals where our cattle waded through waters from our irrigation ditch," says Meiklejohn. "Now, with the water flowing through buried pipeline, we have improved water quality and cleaner corrals."

Dennis Gorsett, soil conservationist, with the NRCS in Grand Junction, explained: In the 1880s when the first pioneers entered the Plateau Valley in Mesa County, they found a stockman's dream. Plenty of water, good summer grazing in the surrounding mountains, and relatively flat mesas just asking to be cleared and irrigated to provide abundant hay crops to feed livestock. Like other places in western Colorado, the homesteaders located their homes and corrals along stream courses or ditches to provide stockwater to their animals when con-

finied for breeding, calving, weaning, or doctoring. A continuous source of fresh water was, and still is, vital to maintain a viable livestock operation.



In each of the four waste management systems, freeze-proof waterers were installed in planned locations in the corrals to provide water to animals in pens.

Today, environmental awareness and regulation coming from the Clean Water Act have led some landowners to rethink their feeding operations. Even small family ranches with less than 300 head of beef cattle need to consider impacts of their operations on off-site water quality.

In the three systems on Big Creek (Meiklejohn's, J. D. Hill, and Clifford Hill), irrigation ditches that had supplied stockwater were piped through the corrals to prevent entry of animal waste, nutrients, and pathogens into tributary waters. On Salt Creek (the Daniel Van Zalen farm), water from a spring that surfaced in the corrals is being collected and piped through the animal confinement area.

A nutrient management plan was also developed by NRCS for each landowner to assure runoff from fields where accumulated manure is spread does not run into surface waters.

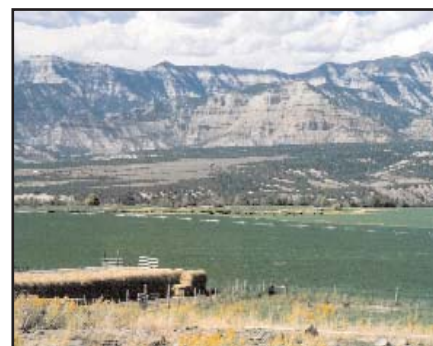
The EQIP contract with Meiklejohn cost-shared the installation of 880 feet of 15-inch pipeline through his corrals. The total project cost \$22,000 with \$16,000 cost-shared through EQIP.

"Without the 75 percent cost-share, it's doubtful whether many ranchers could make these improvements," says Meiklejohn. "There's little financial benefit; however, it does benefit society and other landowners downstream with better water quality," he added.

Meiklejohn and other conservation district supervisors within the Colorado River Basin met in August to recommend priorities for EQIP funding for next fiscal year. Their recommendations for distribution of funding within the watershed are as follows:

- 1) water quality and quantity—67%
- 2) animal waste management—15%
- 3) rangeland improvements—10%
- 4) wildlife projects—3%
- 5) riparian improvements—2 1/2%
- 6) forestry management—2 1/2%

The NRCS will evaluate these and other recommendations from all watersheds within Colorado and establish priorities for 2005 funding.



Irrigated alfalfa on the J.D. Hill ranch in Plateau Valley. Hill utilized federal EQIP cost-share funds to improve the water quality through his corrals.

Last Acre Ceremony

By Mary Miller, Area 3 Public Affairs Specialist

A Last Acre Ceremony, attended by Federal, state, local, agriculture and conservation officials, was held on the Tom Miller Ranch in October. The ceremony marked the completion of Las Animas County's Cooperative Soil Survey, which began in 1975.

Las Animas is Colorado's largest county, comprising nearly 3-million acres. **Allen Green**, NRCS Colorado State Conservationist, said that the survey represented a true partnership between agencies, including Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Colorado

State Forest Service, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River and

Branson-Trinchera Conservation Districts, the U.S. Army at its 240,000-acre Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, individual ranchers, and many others.

Green added that a soil survey is the base inventory for NRCS, and provides the data necessary to facilitate its efforts toward conservation planning.

Lee Neve, NRCS Party Leader for the survey, said that after the survey was shut down for 10 years, he was able to get on a



Lee Neve, Area 3 Soil Scientist, digs the ceremonial last hole.



State Conservationist Allen Green addresses the group assembled for the ceremony.

regular schedule of sampling approximately 100,000 acres/year. Over the years, Neve did much of the surveying himself, but at times had one other soil scientist on his staff to assist with the mapping.

According to Neve, the survey revealed a variety of soils in the county from the wet, forested western area to the dry grasslands in the east.

Investing in the Future:

Agricultural Research Farm a "Center of Excellence"

By: Jeanette Colville
Area 2 Public Affairs Specialist

Located in northeastern Colorado's High Plains, the Irrigation Research Foundation research and demonstration farm is dedicated to the conservation of the Ogallala Aquifer, the potential for sustainable food production on its irrigated farmlands, and the future of the socio-economic quality of life of the region.

Nearly 2,000 visitors from six states attended the 2004 Irrigation Research Foundation Farm Show north of Akron, Colorado this year.

Under two presentation tents NRCS, Monsanto, and Colorado Corn teamed up to premier the Limited Irrigation



Research data is gathered from an extensive number and variety of irrigated plots at the Irrigated Research Foundation research and demonstration farm.

Demonstration study and long-term strip-till study that is changing the face of irrigated agriculture on the High Plains of the Ogallala Region. Under one tent, **Mike Petersen**, NRCS water management specialist, and **Mark Sponsler** from Colorado Corn spoke to the crowd on fertility, water management, precision application, and compaction within the strip-till systems approach.

Under an adjoining tent,

Monsanto agronomists **Bob Leisy** and **Jeff Tichota** discussed the systems approach with hybrid selection, weed management, residue proven value, strip-till concepts, and economics. At the end of the demonstrations more than 365 people walked away "topped-off" with the goods on strip-till.

The Irrigation Research Foundation is a non-profit, independent organization providing a location for testing important issues that affect the region's agricultural producers.



Mike Peterson, NRCS, (left) talks with local farmers touring the vendor's area.

USDA Colorado Diversity Day Celebrations!

USDA employees throughout Colorado hosted Diversity Day Celebrations during the month of September. With an array of activities including potlucks, singing, dancing, and presentations, employees celebrated diversity with our clientele, partners, and other agencies. The Greeley, Cheyenne County, Longmont, and Arapahoe County USDA Service Centers each submitted nominations to enter the USDA Colorado contest for this year's best celebration, and are competing for a special award and traveling plaque. The winner will be announced in the next newsletter. Kudos are in order to these service centers for their participation, enthusiasm, and recognition of the diversity of our organizations and the various cultures in the communities we serve.

Food, Fun, Music & Dance at the Greeley Service Center

Story and photos by Jeanette Colville, Area 2 Public Affairs Specialist

Greeley Service Center employees from FSA, RD, and NRCS hosted a colorful Diversity Day Celebration for family, friends, community leaders, and Conservation District partners with a cornucopia of food, music, and fun.

More than forty people gathered to celebrate the contribution of Weld County's Hispanic community, and to highlight the French, German, Italian, African, Welsh, and Irish heritage represented by Service Center employees and their guests. The richness of the great American Melting Pot was reflected in the vast array of mouth-watering potluck

dishes - New Mexican green chile, German homemade sauerkraut and pork ribs casserole, Spanish rice, Oriental salad, Caribbean Shrimp cocktail, Alaska Native Copper River salmon, Italian salami, German grilled bratwurst, German potato salad, Mexican seven-layer dip, Russian beef stroganoff, Hungarian Chocolate brownies, Georgia pecan squares, and Mexican wedding cake.

The festivities included a performance by the colorful Jalisco Folkloric Mexican Dance Group renowned for their intricate dances.

"This is the first year our Service Center has hosted a Diversity Day Celebration, and we're already looking forward to next year's event," said NRCS Soil Conservationist **TaTrecia Wesley**, who worked with RD Manager **Michael Buck** and NRCS District Conservationist **Jon Wicke** to coordinate the event.



Mexican Folkloric Dancers swirl and turn to the lively music of Jalisco, Mexico, as they display the beauty and style of the century's old dance form.



Community leader and Mayor of Windsor, Ed Starck, joins in the Diversity Day festivities.



Greeley USDA Service Center folks gather to celebrate Diversity Day.



NRCS Greeley Field Office staff (left to right: Susan Schreiber, Shana Harness, Levi Sievers) wait patiently with hands in pockets for the multicultural feast to begin.

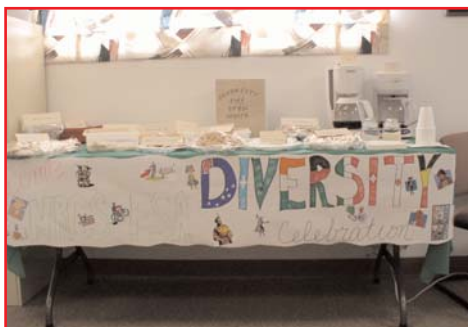


Young dancers provide an extra treat with their innocence and charm.

USDA Colorado Diversity Day Celebrations!

Arapahoe County Presents "Cookies from Around the World"

Arapahoe County Service Center staffers were so enthusiastic about their diversity celebration that they placed an announcement in the local paper and posted flyers around town inviting everyone to come and enjoy an open house featuring "Cookies from Around the World."



Service Center staff created this original table banner depicting international flags and images.



Deric Clemons, Soil Conservationist, enjoys a BIG plate of cookies from around the world!

Close to thirty guests dropped by and were treated to a cookie buffet representing fourteen different cultures! With delicacies such as Scandinavian krumkake, German lebkuchen, Polish kolacky, Russian teacakes, Italian pizzelles, and Chinese fortune cookies, it's likely this celebration of diversity will be part of an annual event at the Arapahoe County Service Center.

Sharing with Storytelling in Longmont

Longmont Service Center employees took advantage of a beautiful Colorado day to eat grilled brats and kraut, drink homemade root-beer, and share family history.

Employees shared stories about their ancestors who come from Russian German, Pennsylvania Dutch, Irish, Swedish, and German lineage. These pioneers eventually migrated to Colorado and many of their descendents



Descendents of some of Colorado's first pioneers include from left to right: Dana Bachman, FSA; Bonnie Smith, FSA-COC; Sean Brown, NRCS; Jean Turner, FSA; Shelly Anderson, NRCS; Cynthia Einsphar, SV and LH Water Conservation District; Terri Jo Laber, FSA; and Nancy McIntyre, Longmont/Boulder Valley SCD. Tim Carney, NRCS, snapped this photo and did the grilling.

continue to farm the land and work in the community today.



Area Three's Springfield Field Office employees enjoyed a potluck with the Farm Service Agency.

The **Springfield Field Office** celebrated Diversity Day with a Potluck Luncheon. They were joined by the entire USDA Service Center.

Cheyenne County Potluck Luncheon

Employees at the Cheyenne County USDA Service Center in Cheyenne Wells celebrated diversity by hosting a potluck luncheon featuring dishes representing their ethnic backgrounds, a tie tying contest, and singing.

The celebration had lots of great food representing nine

different ethnic backgrounds including German peppered beef soup, Irish mist brownies, Russian tea cakes, and English cobblestone bread.

Carol Waugh, District Conservationist, prepared lefse, a traditional Scandinavian, potato based, soft flat bread. And, although the lefse proved to be

a tasteful treat, the most entertaining moment of the day was when everyone joined in to sing the Lefse Song, sung to the tune of "Camptown Races."

Several employees joined in on the tie tying contest; however, it was **Kyle Franz**, Soil Conservationist, who won the competition.